

# ***Between Kant and Hobbes: Finnish Security Policy after the Cold War and European Integration***

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*This paper is based upon the writer's PhD thesis that is soon to be submitted for examination at Manchester Metropolitan University in the UK. Central to the work has been interviews with around 25 Finnish (plus a few non-Finnish) politicians, civil servants, soldiers, journalists, civil society activists and academic researchers. No interviewee requested anonymity and all are listed in thesis, but for reasons of convenience in this working paper I have not cited every interview when referring to it in the text. As so much of the text below is based on the thesis, bibliographic references are also minimal. The full thesis should be available this summer on successful completion.*

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## *Introduction*

Joining the EU in 1995 was a historical change for Finland and had major implications for most areas of public policy, including importantly for security policy. The international environment through the cold war, allied to the policy choices of Finnish leaders, had forced the country into almost half a century of relative isolation. For a country that had only become an independent state in 1917, this meant that much of its national experience was gained during this time of seclusion from the rest of Europe. For Finland, the cold war struggle was one of protecting its sovereignty from Soviet interference – good political relations had to be maintained to stop the USSR from demanding better security relations. Finnish security policy became centrally about how to maintain itself as a unilateral effort, not carried out in conjunction or 'cooperation' with the superpower neighbour.

Hence, the experience of joining the EU – a supranational organisation where the member state decides to pool some of its sovereignty – was clearly a historic turning point for Finland. It was always realised in Finland that joining the EU would have major implications for security policy. Indeed, for many, it was the security implications of being in the EU that were central to joining. Finnish thinking on how the Union provides security has changed over the 18 years since the country first announced that it would seek to join. At times, and for some, amorphous ideas about EU membership anchoring Finnish identity in the European mainstream have been enough to demonstrate how joining has secured Finland. At other times, there has been far more interest in concrete matters such as whether the mutual assistance clause of the Lisbon treaty provides a guarantee along the lines of NATO's article V, or whether participation in EU battlegroups adds or subtracts from Finnish defence

capability. For some in Finland, EU membership is seen as a bridge to NATO membership, others construct the EU as the central reason why Finland does not need to join NATO. But for Finland, when considering security policy, no matter whose opinion is listened to, or how opinions have changed over time, the EU is now central.

This paper outlines some of the key conclusion of my PhD research on Finnish security policy in the post-Cold War era, looking particularly at how EU membership has and has not affected it. It will argue that clearly in the case of Finland, and hence to be expected with other new European Union members, the role of identity and the continual reconstruction of that identity remains dominant in security thinking. European level policies do have a rapid and direct effects but they are, as with other globalising forces, interpreted through the specificities of the local situation. Three case studies will be recounted; firstly the impact of the trans-national political movement that resulted ultimately in the Ottawa convention banning the use of anti-personnel land-mines. In this case Finland found itself at odds with the European Union joint position and became the last EU member state to agree to join-up to the convention. Secondly, the case of the conscription system is considered: Finland maintains a system of full conscription producing a potential huge wartime force but meaning virtually no professional forces. Although the EU does not have any direct say over members' defence solutions, the continued political and social support for conscription in Finland is exceptional within the Union and means that Finland has needed to find specific ways of accommodating its commitments to the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) within this system. Thirdly, the specific case of the impact of the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) on Finnish security policy is considered by looking for difference between the 2001 and 2004 Finnish government's security policy 'white books'.

This paper will argue that Finnish security policy since EU membership supports Ian Clark's argument that trans-national forces, of which EU is one, do not compress the state – the idea of the 'shrinking state'; but rather that global politics cross borders changing the state and being changed by it. As Clark writes: "the change induced by the end of the of the Cold War lies in the nature of the accommodation between 'domestic' and 'transnational' forces, rather than in the specifics of either. The change is *relational* to both rather than *particular* to either" (Clark 1999:5).

### *Theoretical framework*

This paper is based upon the writers PhD thesis that attempts, in showing how transnational politics flow through state boundaries – both changing the domestic environment and being changed by it, to create a more historically and sociologically accurate account of changes in Finnish post cold war security policy. European integration, predominantly in the form of EU membership, has been one of the most salient transnational political processes for Finland since the demise of the Soviet Union. Secondly, the thesis attempts to show how the ambiguity of Finnish security policy is the product of two worldviews that are in a competition, and therefore there is a power struggle within the country on how to understand and react to the external international environment.

The thesis builds upon Ian Clark's attempts to move past what he calls the "Great Divide" (ibid:17), the idea of artificially separate domestic and international

environments that splits International Relations where survival (of the state) is the central question, from the study of politics that has historically focused on domestic issues and the question of what is the good life. Further, “the Great Divide” artificially separates questions of national security from social security, or Security Studies as an academic discipline from Social Policy. The security of people as subjects of the state should not be considered separately from the security of people from want and need within that state. Bryan Mabee argues that Security Studies has always shown ‘a complacency towards history’ (Mabee 2003:146). Mabee argues that states have evolved from the earlier use of despotic power over their subjects – where they simply took their power from society – to infrastructural power where they receive power from society whilst increasingly providing services and security to the society in return. The state and society are in an evolving, political relationship. This is essentially a constructivist analysis, in that it questions the interest and identities of the state, saying they are historically contingent and hence changeable; therefore the state is the product of both internal and external actors who all effect each other to lesser and greater extents. Clark points out that in these ‘mutually constitutive relationships’ – between both different states and between states and their societies – sometimes leads to constructivism being considered politically uninteresting, but both Clark and Mabee argue that these relationships are asymmetric. If we use Finland as an example of this, at certain times the state has been reliant on Finnish society for protection, for example during the second world war where only the total mobilisation of Finnish society allowed the threat of Soviet power to be resisted. At other times, the state has forced society to conform its structure – the civil war being the most obvious example where a considerable subsection of society differed strongly in their vision of what sort of state Finland should be – and suffered massively as a result. Although of course, it is very easy to over draw the state-society distinction<sup>1</sup>, and Wendt’s agent-structure problematic (Wendt 1987: 335-7) can be applied to both, this remains an important tool in understanding how Finnish security policy has been Europeanised and how it has not.

Additionally, to attempt to typify the worldviews visible in Finnish security thinking, the thesis borrows from Robert Cooper’s well known tripartite division of states into the premodern, modern and postmodern (Cooper 2000). Cooper’s system defines the premodern as failed or failing states, where state and governmental exert no real control. Modern states focus on protecting their sovereignty and essentially conform to neo-realist expectations within the international system. Finally, postmodern states are those where trust has replaced competition and between states, where they see an advantage in compromising their own sovereignty through cooperation – the EU members most clearly fit this model. Cooper accepts that there are numerous problems in actually classify all states under this system, but the tripartite division is useful in describing the worldview of foreign and security policy actors. For Finland there remains competition between those who see Finland in the modern, Hobbesian world and those who see it as part of the post-modern Kantian world, and support different visions of security policy as a result. The ambiguities of Finnish security policy can to a great extent be seen as a product of trying to create a policy that sees security in these two different ways simultaneously.

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<sup>1</sup> See also the debate over, and criticism of the “Copenhagen School” (for example McSweeney 1999)

### *Historical background*

History, and particularly the history of neutrality, is important to understanding how Finnish security policy has changed in the post-cold war era. Despite the heroic narratives of the ‘defensive victory’ of the Continuation War (1941-44), Finland emerged from the Second World War defeated and impoverished. It was not occupied by Russia, but lost significant amounts of its territory in Karelia, including its second-largest city, had to resettle an eighth of its population who were made refugees and had severe political restraints placed upon it by the victorious USSR. In the post-war era, maintaining good relations with its superpower neighbour became the overwhelming national interest, and dissenting voices were marginalised and silenced to further this goal. Neutrality was never a legal institution like in Switzerland and Austria. It was a political position adopted due to weakness and began as the only possible policy option that could maintain Finnish independence and democracy, allowing the country to avoid the fate of the Warsaw pact countries after the second world war. Yet despite being born of necessity, through the cold war era it became fetishized by the Finnish body politic and became a tool of domestic power competition. This happened to the extent that it actually began to compromise those core ideals; the process that outsiders would identify as ‘Finlandization’.

Nevertheless, whilst the politicians turned neutrality into liturgy, the cold war was also a time of domestic growth and increasing economic success for the country. This allowed for the creation of a strong welfare state and increasing social equality. For Finns, social justice at home became linked to the neutrality policy internationally, particularly as the state used Nordic identity and cooperation as an important way of demonstrating to the west that it was a Scandinavian social democracy and not a Soviet client. There are numerous historical differences between Finnish and Swedish conceptions of neutrality, but still the Swedish ideas of Nordic peace and internationalist activism became linked to Finnish self-perceptions of neutrality, turning it for many from a tool of realist statecraft to a moral good in itself. Hence, at the end of the cold war, both Finnish society and the political establishment had moved from a purely instrumental idea of neutrality to an emotional commitment to the idea. Until Sweden announced that it would seek European Union membership in 1991, Finnish elites had been stating that Finnish neutrality meant that Finland could never join the EU. But for mainly economic reasons, the Finnish government decided that it also needed to apply and there were concerns that neutrality would complicate this. New terminology – military non-alignment – was created and this allowed Finland to join the EU alongside Sweden without causing huge political debate domestically. Being militarily non-aligned (to Russia) had always been the core aim of cold war neutrality anyway, and plans for what would become ESDP were only embryonic as Finland was negotiating membership in the early 1990s, for non-specialists very little appeared to have changed with the new terminology.

### *Landmines*

The Finnish debate over the Ottawa treaty that banned the possession and usage of anti-personnel landmines (APLs) demonstrated how the specificities of one member state’s historical experience and identity limited the influence of the EU on that state. EU membership was the most important forces driving Finland towards signing the

treaty, and yet despite ending up as the only EU member not to be a signatory, Finland remained outside of the treaty and at odds with the rest of the Union. But this is not simply a case of ‘the national interest’ outweighing solidarity with its partners.

The Ottawa debate illustrates the two central themes examined in my thesis. Firstly there was a clear divide amongst different actors both from the state and society on how to react to the calls to ban APLs dependent on whether their worldview was predominantly modern or postmodern – following Cooper’s model. Secondly it demonstrated the impact of transnational politics on Finnish security making – for Finland the EU position and lobbying by humanitarian international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were very important. Interestingly, the politics took place both ‘above’ and ‘below’ the traditional level of state to state relations as posited by the positivist theories of international relations. The humanitarian NGOs and peace groups built transnational alliances including to Finnish groups, therefore the government found itself pressured from below to support Ottawa from Finnish civil society. This also demonstrated that Finnish society itself is part of a global political process distinct from state to state level. Meanwhile, within the EU a common position was adopted that also supported a call for banning APLs – and hence the government also was pressured from above via its membership of a supra-national organisation, the EU.

Within Finland, the debate over whether to join the Ottawa treaty was framed by those who were against, as a question of whether the country should give up a weapon system vital for its chosen form of national defence in order not to upset some ill-defined sense of international public opinion. Alternatively, those who supported joining the ban argued both from a humanitarian perspective and that it was more important to follow the European Union’s common opinion on that matter, to show Finland’s loyalty to the union, and that the security provided by being a member of the Union’s core was more important than the, arguably questionable, military utility of the landmines themselves.

The idea of the a treaty against APLs was first mooted in the early 1990s, but quickly it became a two track process. NGOs began the process that would ultimately create the Ottawa treaty – joining together to form the International Coalition to Ban Landmines (ICBL). The ICBL gathered increasing state support – notably for Finland, from Norway, Sweden and Canada; all countries that Finland normally identifies with – and later also from the European Parliament. Ultimately the Canadian government, as represent by the foreign minister Lloyd Axworthy, came to lead the process – challenging other states to gather and sign the new treaty in Ottawa in December 1997. The alternative track was to limit the weapons through the Geneva-based United Nations Conference on Disarmament, as an update to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. This was a multilateral procedure where certain countries such as the United States had threatened to veto any changes that they did not approve of. ICBL sympathisers soon came to believe that the ‘Geneva path’ would never have any real impact on landmine numbers.

Finnish NGOs brought the idea of a ban into the Finnish debate in the early 1990s, but the Finnish Defence Forces (FDF) were very strongly against the idea, but their discourse evolved during the debate. Ultimately, what the FDF was defending was its military defensive strength, not one weapon system. They began from a position of

saying that no other weapon could provide the capabilities that APLs did, but as the pressure from Finnish society built, this argument transformed into there being no other weapon system that Finland could afford could offer the same capability. The military was able to create a situation where they had a certain level defensive capability that could not be lowered, and that if they were to give up APLs, they would need the money to buy alternative systems to replace them with.

The Finnish government accepted that there were humanitarian reasons for a ban, but argued for the UN 'Geneva route' and not the ICBL model. By 1997, the foreign minister Tarja Halonen (now president), who was a supporter of the ICBL, stated that in supporting the Geneva process, Finland was simply trying to avoid acting on the issue. Until that time, Finland had not been outside of the EU mainstream, but changes in government in both the UK and France that year quickly led to the majority of EU members swinging behind the ICBL and along with supportive EU presidencies, the Union adopted a common position that in many ways supported the ban in 1997 (Joint Action 1997). This has been described as "fundamentally ambiguous document" as it "omits any mention of the prohibition of use or stockpiling of landmines" (Long 2002: 437), and this allowed Finland to be signatory to it, although the Finnish parliamentary defence committee see it as a very important document because they argue that although it did not require instant action on the part of Finland it ultimately committed the country to getting rid of its land mines (Defence Committee 2004:18). Other institutions of the EU have been less diplomatic and the European Parliament has directly criticised the Finnish policy in a number of reports. A number of interviewees during my research who had represented Finland in the EU in different capacities noted the pressures that the common EU position caused problems – generally they noted that the other states seemed to understand Finland's particular position, but Finland had to continually need to soften language in declarations and the like, so as to not be excluded. The most apparent case like this was during the 1999 Finnish presidency where the Finnish ambassador to the UN had to speak for the Union at the UN welcoming the coming into force of the Ottawa treaty, when her country had itself not signed it.

Within Finland the APL debate divided the government, the parliament, and Finnish society. The FDF were very influential in the debate, officially providing what they believed as technical military opinions, but through influence networks attacking politically those who supported a ban. The president of the Finnish Red Cross for example, was attacked as a naïve idealist in the media by the reserve officers' association – and independent organisation, but one with an unsurprisingly close relationships to the FDF. Sympathetic MPs made sure the military's position was well represented within the parliament. Those who were supporting a ban felt they pushing against the tide – noting the way conscription, which means 80 percent of Finnish men have a reserve rank, meant that the military had ways of getting its message to large parts of the population. Notable was the fact that, according to opinion polls, women were more supportive of the ban than men. A minister at the time also recounted how foreign ministry officials who were against the treaty were briefing the Finnish president, who remains a central actor in foreign policy, without the knowledge of the foreign minister who was for a ban.

Nevertheless, Finland clearly felt considerable international pressure on the issue. A number of officials interviewed said that it was difficult for the country to be outside

of its normal reference group of progressive states, such as its Nordic neighbours and Canada, and clearly being the EU exception was particularly difficult. The government set a goal of signing the treaty in 2006 and ratifying in 2010 but could not keep to this timetable because of a lack of budget to provide the FDF with funding for alternative weapons. This has now been pushed back to signing in 2012 and ratifying in 2016. Even after the enlargements of the EU, Finland remains the only EU country not to have signed the Ottawa treaty.

Although the landmine issue demonstrates how the modern worldview – that argued Finland must always be ready to defend itself and not accept limitation on how that defence could be staged – was more influential when Finland was part of the early Ottawa process, ultimately it can be argued that the postmodern worldview based on international laws and trust has won out with an eventual agreement to accede to the treaty. The sense that Finland should join the treaty never went away despite the arguments that it was impossible for Finland to join, and Finland being out of step with the rest of the EU was central to this. The influence of the military on society remains great, as will be explored further below, and ‘national defence’ is a strong narrative in resisting political pressure from outside. But the FDF, by changing its position from mines being absolutely necessary for Finland’s defence, to that of there being military alternatives to APLs but that they were too expensive to procure, actually opened the door for the change in policy. This argumentation turned the issue from being one of pure security policy into one of budgetary policy.

In an interview one of those involved in lobbying for the ban, Laura Lodenius of the Finnish Peace Union, stated that she believes that in many ways this transition from a security to a budgetary question actually deferred the issue even further because MPs did a political calculation of which was easier to “ride out” – the international pressure on Finland, or the domestic political cost of taking the money for replacement systems from elsewhere in the budget. She notes that MPs predominantly operate in the domestic political realm so do not feel the pressure that government ministers and Ministry for Foreign Affairs officials have done over the issue from abroad. She added that the budgetary equation has made it hard for even the leftwing parties; SDP, Left Alliance and Greens to fully support banning APLs. This was supported by another interviewee, Pilvi-Sisko Vierros of the arms control unit of the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, who also saw that budgetary opportunity-costs had become the central political issue over Finland fully joining the treaty.

The debate over the Ottawa treaty shows how Finnish political identity is still linked to a military defence of the country. The defence forces can appeal to patriotism to pursue their policy agenda. Ultimately the transnational political forces that pushed towards Finland towards joining the ban were limited by domestic specificities, but nevertheless, particularly with the EU, it is possible to see the important effects that they had on the debate.

### *Conscription*

As noted above, conscription is still a very important factor in Finnish society and security policy. Finnish defence policy is different from most other European Union

states in that its central doctrine of territorial defence – defending the whole territory of the state – requires very large forces. Therefore Finland maintains a system of military service for the vast majority of its young men. More than 80 percent do military service, the civilian alternative is over twice as long as the minimum military service, medical exemptions are uncommon and ‘total refusers’ are sent to prison. This means, should the military be mobilised, Finland would have a wartime force level 350,000 men – one of the biggest militaries in Europe.

Finland has resisted the move across the rest of Europe towards professional military forces. Conscription was the norm during the cold war in both western and eastern Europe. In modern times, only the Anglo-Saxon world has generally favoured professional militaries over conscripts, but even in those states at times of crisis conscription has been used – for example by the United States during the Korean and Vietnam wars. But since the fall of the Berlin Wall, European countries have moved away from conscription. Firstly, without the existential threat of the Warsaw Pact (or of an unfriendly NATO in Eastern Europe) the need for mass armies seemed less. Secondly, the Gulf War of 1991 was seen by many as indicative of a ‘new world order’ of crisis management operations rather than total war. Although American networked forces dominated, the French military were impressed by the performance of the all-professional British forces, and this helped spur a relatively rapid military professionalisation in the country where modern conscription originated. As NATO reinvented itself, particularly in the Balkans, as a crisis management organisation – the need was for smaller numbers of deployable, mobile and highly trained troops who could work with other forces and airpower. This was in many ways the opposite to the mass conscript armies of the cold war. For the eastern European countries, joining NATO, and to a lesser extent the EU, has led the majority of them to professionalise their militaries.

An interviewee in the Finnish Ministry of Defence pointed out that that Finnish defence system has been essentially untested since 1945 and has therefore never been through a process like the French with the Gulf War, or the US in Vietnam where it was found wanting. The Finnish conscription system is a product of the second world war. The second world war was, as noted above, a case of the total mobilisation of the Finnish state and society to withstand the Soviet threat. Finland’s war was in two major phases, the Winter War of 1939-40 and the Continuation War on 1941-45. The Winter War was a case of unprovoked aggression by the USSR against a small democracy and, being politically uncomplicated, is central to contemporary lessons from history. The Continuation War was more complex; Finland allied to the Nazis and German forces fought inside the country. Finland also crossed the old border in the Soviet Union, annexing territory that had never been part of the country, and this, for example, led to a British declaration of war on the country. Nevertheless, the mass mobilisation of Finnish society managed to exert high enough a cost from the USSR to bring the fighting to an end. Mass conscription through the cold war was, therefore, a deterrent aimed at demonstrating how high a price could be extracted should the USSR try to attack.

As a result, Kari Laitinen (2006:50) argues that the Finnish conscription system has been constructed through the intervening half century via a discourse of “emancipatory nationalism”. Conscription becomes seen both a way of creating and reinforcing the will to defend the nation-state (although one military academic argues

that survey data shows that Finns are patriotic without conscription – women do not do military service yet have similar attitudes to men, and men entering their conscription service have had their attitudes formed before call-up), as well as the actual method of defence. The concept of the ‘will to defend’ has become a very important factor in political debate about conscription and is supported at the official level by the military establishment. There is a sense that any thing that stops most Finnish men from having direct contact with the military, will mean Finns are less likely to want to defend the fatherland. Conscription has also come to be seen as a positive force for social harmony; bringing all parts of society together (although this is clearly not true because the military reproduces the linguistic division of Swedish and Finnish speakers seen throughout the Finnish state), and for socialising Finnish boys into Finnish men. Military officers readily state that conscription is part of the national education system, even if it is not integrated into the rest of the system. Public support for conscription remains overwhelming, and interestingly women support the institution slightly more than men do. Only one smaller party, the Greens, has even suggested changing the system. For all these reasons it is clear that no major change will take place in the Finnish defence structure in the near of mid term.

A number of interviewees both inside and outside of the defence establishment actually noted that the success of the military’s creation of conscription as an institution has trapped them within its confines. Although in official declarations the strengths of the current system are always highlighted (for example – recruiting crisis management soldiers from the reserves means they bring civilian skills with them), on an individual level interviewees in the defence establishment openly admit the weaknesses (those crisis management troops might be good at policing, public administration, or running engineering projects, but they simply are not very experienced soldiers). The former head of the FDF, Admiral Kaskeala, stated in 2008 that the military does not need as many conscripts, and indeed the numbers recruited actually detract from Finland’s military credibility, but he was criticized by politicians for making this point. Much debate in the last couple of years has been around the wartime force level. Kaskeala stated that Finland needs ‘only’ a wartime force level of 250 000, but the government has insisted the figure stays at 350 000. This demonstrates how conscription has become more than a system of providing military manpower to the defence forces, in that the political class feels that maintaining it at a high level is more important than the military’s wishes. Ultimately conscription is no longer the optimal tool for providing Finland security, but rather it has become part of the values to be secured by the state.

Nevertheless, despite the enduring power of conscription to help set the extent and method of the Finnish defence system, Europeanisation has led to some clear changes in the Finnish defence system. During the cold war Finland provided troops to various UN peacekeeping operation where its neutral status was an asset. Through the 1990s Finland had to reconsider what international operations it was willing to participate in as peacekeeping was increasingly superseded by crisis management, most notably in the Balkans. It was a major departure for Finland to contribute troops to IFOR/SFOR in Bosnia through the Partnership for Peace (PfP) with NATO, and later even more controversially to KFOR in Kosovo. Finland also has troops in Afghanistan as part of the ISAF mission.

Troops for these missions are volunteers who are recruited from the reserves to come back into the army to serve on international duties, but it has been Finland's activism within the EU that created the most extensive changes. Although Finland joined the EU without any opt outs, the early discussion of CFSP and ESDP in particular were seen only as *potential* 'development paths' for the union, and the idea of military cooperation in particular was seen as politically undesirable by many on the Finnish left, including the current president. But with the creation of the ESDP with the Amsterdam treaty and then the Helsinki Headline goals, Finland signed up to providing the EU with a military capacity. This was formalised in the battlegroup structure of which the Finns have been supporters, joining two different groups the Nordic group and the German-Dutch-Finnish group. To account for Finnish activism on this front, rather than seeing it as a support of the militarization of the EU, Finnish policy should be seen as an attempt to resist permanent structured cooperation, and maintain the right to take a full part in all the EU's activities. The fear was that permanent structured cooperation on military issues could have set criteria for inclusion that Finland could not have met due to it not being a NATO member, and then being excluded from such groups would be seen as a security deficit. Finnish policy focused on not letting a gap open up between different section of the EU; Ojanen writes: "It seemed that Finland was early on conscious of the potential harm caused by such a gap. Repeatedly, it has sought to compensate in practice for what it might have harmed in theory... by activism and generous troop commitments" (Ojanen 2007:59).

In order to have trained forces on standby during the readiness periods of the two battle groups, the FDF have begun employing contract soldiers for periods of a year or just over. Although the military do not find this particularly useful – new soldiers are having to be recruited and trained for each time Finland is part of a battlegroup at readiness – it remains an important indicator of change brought on by EU membership. Previously before committing to the battlegroups, the only professionals in the Finnish military were the officers and NCOs who trained the conscripts plus a small number in technical roles, for example technicians in the air force. The military now favours more international commitments, such as the NATO rapid response force, as it would allow them to recruit and keep more professional soldiers.

Conscription has become part of Finnish identity because it represented the successful balance between the Finnish state and nation and has become indicative of the 'good Finland' – the social democratic bargain of equality and social security. Conscription is seen as both part of the bargain, and the way in which this social compact is protected from malevolent outside forces. Changes to conscription represent changes to that compact and, hence, represent the change and uncertainty implicit in globalization. At the same time, those who support the continuance of conscription can still gain significant support because it makes (some) sense within the realist worldview of modern states in an anarchic international environment. To understand the enduring attraction of this worldview in Finland, Finnish threat images need to be considered, and centrally the image of Russia in Finland. It is here that distinct differences exists to a central EU view of the international environment, even if some of the newer EU members see Russia in a similar way to Finland.

*Threat images and the European Security Strategy*

The European Security Strategy (ESS), adopted by the Union in 2003, was response to the US national security strategy of 2002 that had outlined the doctrine of pre-emption and showed the US to be on the road to war in Iraq. The Iraq situation split the EU, and led to a concerted effort in the Council to prepare a document that all the EU could support outlining an alternative European vision of security. It can be read, therefore, as the lowest common denominator between the member states but its importance is that it show what all could agree on in the realm of security. In the thesis, I investigate if the ESS has had an impact on Finnish security thinking by comparing it to the Finnish security and defence white paper of 2001 (predating the ESS) and the same from 2004 (the first security white paper from any of the EU members published after the ESS).

Finland has for many years published security and defence policy reports approximately every four years in the form of “white books”. Originally produced under the auspices of the parliament but with expert assistance, they have been since the mid-1990s produced by the government and then debated by parliament. This is demonstrative of the post-cold war trend of allowing more public debate on security and defence issues – areas that were during the cold war little discussed and predominantly issues that the president controlled. The white books theoretically set out the government’s view of the global security environment and Finnish policy resulting from those worldviews. But critics – including one interviewee, a long-time chair of the parliamentary foreign affairs committee, Liisa Jaakonsaari – argue that the policy discussion is mostly focused on defence and often has little obvious connection to the global security environment discussion. A number of interviewees noted that defence policy changes – because of the doctrine of territorial defence: of defending the entire country – often have very particular local political implications, such as the closing or moving of garrisons. As a result, the local implications of defence budget planning is often the most political issue domestically that comes out of the white book process, although what language the government adopts on NATO has also been the other major focus of interest.

The ESS outlines five central threats to European security - terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), regional conflicts, state failure, and organised crime. These threats are mentioned many multiples of times more in the 2004 Finnish report than in the 2001 report – for example terrorism was mentioned 15 times in 2001 and over 200 times in 2004. But interviews with those involved in the writing of the white papers within the Finnish state indicate that whilst there was a general awareness of the European document, it had very little impact on the writing of the Finnish 2004 white book. Rather, both documents can be seen as products of their time and reflecting the central issues of that period<sup>2</sup>. Indeed, the senior officials interviewed all saw the ESS predominantly as a communications document from the EU to the citizens of Europe and the world beyond.

Therefore the resemblances between the ESS and the 2004 Finnish paper that followed it are superficial but there is one fundamental difference between the two documents: how Russia is envisioned. The ESS contains the confident assertion that that large scale aggression against any EU member is “improbable” (Council of the

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<sup>2</sup> By way of comparison the December 2008 update to the ESS mentions contemporary issues of now, such as piracy and energy security.

European Union 2003:9), the Finnish Ministry of Defence disagrees saying: “use of military force against Finland is still possible - furthermore, the threat can increase rapidly” and they make clear that this threat would emanate from Russia (Puolustusministeriö 2006:11). This is the fundamental difference in the threat images that seem to underlie the Finnish and European documents. How ‘official Finland’ discusses Russia is complicated and reflects both differences in nuance and also far more fundamental differences amongst the different centres of power and influence within Finnish elites. The central problem could be described as how to talk about Russia without talking about Russia, Arto Nokkala writes that this is historically rooted in the Cold War experience where the duality of both needing to maintain friendly relations with the Soviet Union, whilst at the same time ensuring the public understood the threat that the USSR represented, produced a discursive dilemma for cold war Finland (Nokkala 2008:77). This remains the situation to the current day – the 2004 white paper notes that Finland is “continuing and intensifying its wide-ranging cooperation” with Russia (Prime Minister’s Office 2004:82), yet at the same time as one military officer interviewed said “when you look at our defence policy and related threat perceptions [in the white book], the only thing that can come to mind is Russia”.

Whilst Finland maintains a huge conscript army and territorial defence as its fundamental military strategies, this can not be disputed. Even if one argues that conscription has purely become a social/educational institution with no military value, and that territorial defence is simply regional policy based on transfer payments to marginalized parts of the country, it is still justified to Finns as a necessary military system for the defence of the country and there is no doubt who that defence is from. Yet in the ESS, Russia is only mentioned as a partner: “we should continue to work for closer relations with Russia, a major factor in our security and prosperity” (Council of the European Union 2003:28)<sup>3</sup>. Interviewees said that there had been disappointment that the ESS had not had more to say on Russia, and the former chair of the parliamentary foreign affairs committee told me it was a Finnish “failure” to not have received more consideration of Finnish views of Russia in the drafting of the ESS. This though is a view from outside the government reflecting the more Realist trend in Finnish security thinking; the government was clearly comfortable with the ESS’s more postmodern approach of not naming any states as threats.

The ESS does reflect a much broader conception of security than the classical realist state-to-state vision. It mentions security threats that are mainly threats to society and to safety domestically, rather than existential dilemmas. Within Finland there is an increase of activity on these issues as well, particularly with the Prime Minister’s Office playing an increasing role coordinating policy that goes beyond traditional defence or internal (policing) matters. The permanent under secretary of state at the Prime Minister’s Office said when interviewed that although all of these issues were rising on the agenda over the past decade, it was the Asian Tsunami that had been a major motivator in doing more. This was the biggest loss of Finnish lives in a single incident since the second world war, and left thousands of Finns in need of rescue. He described it a major threat to the security of Finns and yet one where the military played no role. There is bureaucratic competition within the state, particularly as the

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<sup>3</sup> Russia is also mentioned as cooperation partner in stabilizing the Balkans (Council 2003:18) and in the search for peace in the Mid East (ibid:19).

military tries to assert that it has a role in these ‘mid-threat’ scenarios – larger than local emergencies, but less than direct threats to the state. This attempt by the military to show they have other abilities beyond that as a training institution for a mass army of defence demonstrates how they also see the importance of the postmodern security threats as outlined in the ESS.

In giving Parliament’s response to the government’s 2004 security and defence white paper, the Defence Committee wrote: “The Committee feels that the differences of the European Security Strategy threat scenarios compared to Finland’s national crisis and threat scenarios should also have been evaluated in the report [the white paper]” (Defence Committee 2004:13). Fundamental to the ESS is the idea that military threats to its member-states are “improbable” and therefore it does not deal with them at all, rather looking threats that are more “diverse, less visible and less predictable” (Council of the European Union 2003:3). Although Finland also shares these threat scenarios, and indeed with the Asian Tsunami has had direct experience of these new types of threats to Finnish society, it has not yet relinquished its hold on traditional threat scenarios that posit Russia as a potential military opponent to the country. For neo-realists, this comes as no surprise – the logic of anarchic international environment indeed requires that states defend against possible existential threats. But not all states make the same decisions, most notably for Finland – Sweden has radically altered its security policy in the last half decade, moving rapidly away from a mass conscript army and a doctrine of territorial defence similar to Finland’s to a small, highly-trained and powerfully equipped force designed more for taking part in international crisis management missions than for defending Sweden from invasion. Norwegian defence policy has not altered to the same extent as Sweden but has also clearly moved in the same direction, away from a model that again was very similar to Finland’s chosen defence solutions. Critics claim that Finland’s thinking on security, and therefore its defence policy, is outdated: Jaakonsaari called the Finnish defence forces an “open air museum”.

### *Conclusion*

Finland is not yet ready to move away from seeing its relations with Russia through a modern prism, where anarchy, state interest and the security dilemma still reign. Whilst social changes arguably threaten this defence identity, or “the will to defend” as the Finnish state puts it, transnational factors reinforce it: President Putin’s combative rhetoric to the west, the Russian war with Georgia in August 2008, the continued infringements of Finnish airspace by Russian air force planes through 2007 and 2008. For the foreseeable future, Finnish security policy will need to maintain its delicate balance between the modern and the post-modern.

Overall, what my thesis research suggests is that Finnish identity is connected to defence – to resisting Russia, to maintaining the difference. There are no great state-society divisions; the state reflects the democratic will of the citizens in maintaining an ambiguous security policy for both the Hobbesian, modern world of the anarchical international environment and the Kantian, postmodern world of the post-sovereign EU. The transnational politics that led other countries to abandon conscription and to ban landmines crossed Finnish boundaries as well, but they were interpreted through the prism of Finnish identity and through the nature of the compact between the

Finnish society and state and therefore producing different outcomes as a result. The EU has become the central referent point for Finnish foreign policy, to the extent that some analysts argue as to whether there is anything left that should really be called Finnish foreign policy, but security policy is a broader area including much of defence policy. Here the impacts of Europeanisation are limited, not because Finland does not play a full part in ESDP, but because the processes are seen and used in ways that result from the local specificities.

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